



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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Final Rule Implements Reef Fish Amendment 23 Establishing a Rebuilding Plan for Vermilion Snapper *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published a final rule in the *Federal Register* implementing the approved regulatory actions in Amendment 23 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP). The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council in cooperation with NMFS developed the FMP. The intended effect of the final rule is to end overfishing and rebuild the vermilion snapper resource. The final rule is effective July 8, 2005.

The final rule will:

- (1) Establish a 10-year vermilion snapper rebuilding plan, structured in one 4-year interval followed by two 3-year intervals, that would end overfishing and rebuild the stock to the biomass associated with maximum sustainable yield.
- (2) Establish a minimum size of 11 inches total length for both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- (3) Establish a bag limit of 10 vermilion snapper within the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit for the recreational fishery.
- (4) Establish a closed season from April 22 through May 31 for the commercial fishery.

NMFS prepared a Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) and a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) that augments the findings of the FMP's RIR. The FRFA is available from the Sustainable Fisheries Office, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Written copies of the final rule may be obtained from the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. Electronic copies of the final rule may be obtained from the *Federal Register* website at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.

This Small Entity Compliance Guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. Any discrepancies between this document and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. NMFS is an agency of the Department of Commerce.

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